

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1858
INFO AMCONS BELIZE CITY
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY MEXICO CITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 7123

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, SP, GT, BH
SUBJECT: REPORTED SPANISH INTEREST IN GUATEMALA-BELIZE PROBLEM

REF: STATE 227057, GUATEMALA 5933, MADRID 6079, MADRID 5891
ALL NOTAL

1. THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE ON THE VISIT TO GUATEMALA OF THE KING AND QUEEN HAS JUAN CARLOS EXPRESSING THE HOPE THAT THE "JUST AND LEGITIMATE GUATEMALAN ASPIRATIONS (RE BELIZE AS EXPLAINED BY LAUGERUD) ACHIEVE, BY MEANS OF NEGOTIATION, A SATISFACTORY SOLUTION, FOR WHICH HE EXPRESSED THE MOST DECIDED SUPPORT OF HIS COUNTRY." IN ANOTHER PARAGRAPH, THE COMMUNIQUE SPEAKS OF THE "IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT ACHIEVED BY GUATEMALAN-SPANISH TECHNICAL COOPERATION IN THE SECTORS OF CIVIL AVIATION, TRAINING OF MILITARY PERSONNEL, AND TRANSPORTATION, AMONG OTHERS."

2. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF, THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S SUBDIRECTOR GENERAL FOR IBERO-AMERICA (BERMEJO) SAID THESE WERE THE REFERENCES WHICH SET OFF THE MEXICANS. ON MILITARY TRAINING, HE WENT ON, AS HAS ALREADY BEEN
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EXPLAINED TO THE MEXICANS, SPAIN HAS NO MILITARY ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT WITH ANY OTHER COUNTRY. WHAT IT DOES HAVE, AND HAS HAD FOR SOME YEARS, IS A PROGRAM OF TECHNICAL COOPERATION WHICH INCLUDES A MINOR MILITARY COMPONENT OPEN TO ALL THE COUNTRIES OF LATIN AMERICA EXCEPT CUBA, FOR OBVIOUS REASONS, AND MEXICO FOR THE HARDLY LESS OBVIOUS ONE THAT THEY HAVE NOT HAD DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. UNDER THIS PROGRAM THERE HAS

NEVER BEEN MORE THAN A HANDFUL OF LA MILITARY IN SPAIN AT ANY ONE TIME, SAID BERMEJO, AND GUATEMALA HAS BEEN ONE OF THE COUNTRIES WITH LOWEST PARTICIPATION.

3. AS NOTED IN THE MADRID REFTELS, IT WAS ANTICIPATED THAT JUAN CARLOS WOULD EXPRESS SOME KIND OF SUPPORT FOR GUATEMALA'S BELIZE CLAIM DURING HIS VISIT THERE, SUPPORT THAT WOULD NOT NECESSARILY SOUND EVENLY BALANCED. THE POSITION ATTRIBUTED TO THE KING BY THE PRESS DREW A PROMPT DEMURRA HERE FROM SOCIALIST (PSOE) LEADER FELIPE GONZALEZ, AND THE ISSUE WAS SUBSEQUENTLY RAISED BY THE PSOE SPOKESMAN IN THE SEPT 20 CORTES FOREIGN POLICY DEBATE (MADRID 7081).

4. AS THAT TELEGRAM NOTED, FONMIN OREJA'S RESPONSE ON BELIZE WAS THE GOS' WORLD-WIDE VERSION, I.E. IT COUPLED A BOW TO GUATEMALA'S "HISTORIC RIGHTS" WITH A CALL FOR RECOGNITION OF "THE LEGITIMATE INTERESTS OF THE POPULATION OF BELIZE."

5. REGARDING THE APPEARANCE OF SOME "TILT" IN GUATEMALA, BERMEJO EXPLAINED SOMEWHAT INGENUOUSLY IT WAS THE GOS' CONVICTION THAT GUATEMALA HAD LOST THE DIPLOMATIC BATTLE, AND THAT IT WAS NOW NECESSARY TO HELP IT TO SAVE FACT, PRECISELY SO IT COULD AFFORD TO ACCEPT A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION. AVOIDING HOSTILITIES WAS DESIRABLE NOT ONLY FOR ALL THE ORDINARY REASONS, HE ADDED, BUT ALSO IN ORDER TO PRECLUDE THE POSSIBILITY THAT CUBAN "VOLUNTEERS" WOULD ENTER THE FRAY, WITH DIFFICULT CONSE-
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QUENCES. BELIZE WAS, AFTER ALL, MUCH CLOSER TO CUBA THAN ANGOLA, BERMEJO CONCLUDED. STABLER

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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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